

Wycombe Wanderers 4, Dulwich Hamlet 2

THE ULTIMATE irony of Wycombe Wanderers' season came with victory in the A.F.A. Invitation Cup at Loakes Park on Saturday.

For the only truly competitive trophy they can claim after the rigours of a ten-month campaign, turns out to be 12 months out of date, already yielded to either Worthing or Eastbourne, and their's for just seven days before next Saturday's final of the 1968-69 competition. And to top it all, Wanderers have withdrawn from next year's event anyway.

Nonetheless, the 1967-68 Amateur Football Alliance Invitation Cup is at Loakes Park, and for that Wycombe have the tricky twosome—Tony Horseman and Viv Busby—to thank.

Not only did they share the goals equally, but they also assisted each other in three of the four. Busby again bounded onto the scene seeking, and often finding, space in which to shoot.

After Dulwich had mounted an opening offensive, in which Wyatt, later to be Hamlet's lone scorer, mingled precariously among the home defence, it was the Wycombe number eleven who heralded a fight back, with a 24th minute effort, forcing Overton into swift action.

Three minutes later, the Dulwich keeper succumbed to weight of numbers, as Busby and Horseman zoned in. The former's hesitation allowed Overton the chance to barge down a first shot, and he followed up by giving Horseman's attempt a similar fate. But, third time lucky, Busby slammed the ball into the far corner from inside the box.

More hesitation, this time from Faulkner, almost cost Wycombe another goal before half time. Up popped Horseman however to slide the second over Hamlet's line from close in.

The match had not been, and despite the four-goal advantage Wanderers achieved after the interval, never was to be plain sailing. Although a continual downpour for the latter 45 minutes, transformed Loakes Park into a lake more suitable for just that.

Once in arrears, Dulwich brawn was brought into the reckoning, with the burly but obvious, Swan, a leading offender. His overzealous tactics won him nothing but abuse from a smallish gallery and a 38th minute chat to the referee.

In the 53rd minute, Horseman and Busby swung once more into a co-action, outwitting Overton for number three. A typical goal, it was made by Horseman's pass out from the pack centre and finished off via a Busby drive.

Bringing substitute, Hammond on for Bibb in the 64th minute, did nothing to start Hamlet on the road back. On the contrary, within literally seconds, Horseman scored with a flick shot, assisted by . . . who else but Busby.

What did finally help the Dulwich cause was the inevitable chaos introduced to the match by a tropical cloudburst. An own goal, due entirely to a misunderstanding between Pratt and Rundle, and resulting in the latter backheading into his own net, cut the lead back 18 minutes from time.

But somehow the possibility of a shock finish was just not on—even when, two minutes from full time, Wyatt slotted Hamlet's second close to the nearside post.

After the match, Mr. W. J. D. Weir, a life vice-president of the A.F.A., presented Wycombe's acting skipper, Lou Temel, with the trophy.

Interest note: What started off as a coincidence is fast becoming a superstition. For of the 14 cup finals, from schoolboys to senior amateur matches, played at Loakes Park this season, all the winning clubs have come out of the home dressing room. Among the lucky ones—Britwell Y.C., Broomwades, Naphill, Wokingham Town, Beacons Bottom, and of course Wanderers themselves.

Wycombe: J. Pratt; K. Stevenson, L. Temel; J. Lailey, I. Rundle, D. Thomas; L. Worley, B. Baker, V. Faulkner, A. Horseman, V. Busby.

Dulwich: J. Overton; P. Smith, E. Shepherd; S. Bibb (sub. J. Hammond), P. Gaydon, V. Heasman; B. O'Connell, J. Swan, K. Stoddart, A. Wyatt, R. Shearing.

